English tracts, 1640-1660

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AN ADDRESSE TO THE Lord Mayor, ALDERMEN, AND COMMON-COUNCEL Of the Honourable City of *LONDON*, And in particular to the *Repreſentatives* thereof in the Parliament now Aſſembled.

By Sir *Francis Nethersole* of *Nethersole*, in the County of *Kent*, Knight.

Except the Lord build the Houſe, they labour in vaine that build it: Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain, Pſal. 127. 1.

He that loveth Father or mother more then me, is not worthy of me, Matth. 10. 37.

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My Lord, and Gentlemen.

Soone after the beginning of the late unnatural Warre between the King and his Parliament, the iſſue whereof hath proved deſtructive to them both, as I foretold the one of them that it would prove, before they, or ſome of them had deſtroy'd the other; I was bold to dedicate certaine conſiderations thereupon to the then Lord Mayor, and Aldermen of the City, together with a project for a Petition tending to a ſpeedy accommodation of theſe unhappy differences, which ſome wiſe men have thought might have been of as good uſe as any other of the three then in agitation in the City; if it had found entertainment with them, who then were in authority therein. And in the year, 1648. when the ſaid Warre was near to an end with us, and the then King and Parliament yet in being, I preſumed to addreſſe certaine Problems to the then Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common-Councel, which I thought neceſſary to be determined by all, that either had, or had not taken part on either ſide in the ſaid Warre, for the making of their peace with God, and the diſpoſing

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of them to an hearty peace one with another, which I hope was no evil deſigne, though for good reaſon I diſguiſed my ſelf in the making of that, as I had concealed my ſelf in the former addreſſe. I ſhall now with open face make a third Addreſſe to your Lordſhip, the Aldermen, and Common-Councel, and in particular to the now choſen Members of Parliament for the City, when I ſhall firſt have given your Lordſhip and them a ſhort account of my being as diſ-intereſſed a perſon in the ſad diviſions of the times as any other; which I cannot do more briefly, or more fully any other way, then by referring you to the annexed relations of my comportment in the late Warre towards both ſides, written at the date of them upon the occaſion of my having then been a Petitioner to the Committee of *Coventry* for liberty to have gone up to *London*, there to have compounded for a part of the eſtate of a Nephew of mine, a little before ſlaine on the Kings ſide, to which I was his heir at Law, but could not then obtaine that favour, nor the year after neither, but upon the termes you may finde in the addition to what hath paſſed between me, and the ſaid Committee. By which relations, your Lordſhip and the reſt may ſee, what my opinion of the ſaid Warre was from the beginning to the end thereof, and that my behaviour was ever conformable to my opinion, the grounds whereof I have diſcovered in my ſaid Problems. To which relations I have but this to adde, that in many extraordinary occaſions I have had ſince to examine my conſcience, I never yet found cauſe to repent me either of my opinion, or of my behaviour in reference to the ſaid Warre, and that my daily private prayers have been, and to this day con-

conſtantly are agreeable unto them. In which among many other relating to this Church, and State, I do ever make one Petition to this purpoſe, That God would be pleaſed to forgive all the National and perſonal ſinnes of the people of this Kingdome, but more eſpecially thoſe ſins (certainly known to his Divine Majeſty onely) for which he did firſt daſh the late King and his Parliament one againſt another, then raiſed up weak means by his Almighty power to deſtroy them both, and for which he hath already ſorely ſhaken, and now threatneth utterly to ruine this Church and State. And how near they now are to utter ruine by our diviſions at home, and Warre, and feare of more Warres from abroad; I would it were not too viſible to every one that hath but half an eye. For the prevention whereof I humbly beſeech your Lordſhip and the reſt to give me leave to propound theſe few things to your mature conſideration, and deliberate reſolution.

Firſt, becauſe it is impoſſible that we ſhould ever be brought to any good and perfect agreement among our ſelves (which if we once were againe, we need be in no more feare of all the world beſides then heretofore we were) until we have all made our peace with God, whether it may not be fit for your Lordſhip and the reſt ſpeedily to petition his Highneſſe, and his Parliament (who this very day are keeping a Faſt in their reſpective Houſes) to joyne together in the proclaiming not of ſuch a Faſt as we have already kept too many, but ſuch a one as was proclaimed in *Niniveh* by the decree of the King, and his Nobles, and obſerved by the people thereof, when perhaps that great Citie was not in greater danger then yours now is. And

that as a neceſſarie preparative thereunto, there may be a convenient number of godly, wiſe perſons choſen, and commiſſioned by them to make a prudent, and diligent enquirie after all the moſt crying ſins of this Kingdome, and thoſe in ſpecial, which may have been committed by the late King and his Parliaments, and for which it may moſt probablie be collected that God permitted the devil, and his inſtruments to ſtirre them up to the making of ſuch a Warre one againſt another, as I think is without preſident, till they were both deſtroyed: To which Commiſſioners, if by them commanded, I ſhall by letter, (for I am now too old for travels) freely declare the apprehenſions which have been now a long time fixed in my profoundeſt thoughts.

Secondly, whether it may not be, not only fit, but neceſſarie for your Lordſhip, and the reſt in the ſame Petition: humblie to move the Lord Protector and his Parliament, that by their Authority an Act may ſpeedilie be paſſed for the re-aſſembling of all the Members of both Houſes, who conſtantlie adhered to that Parliament of this Kingdome which was latelie in Warre with their King, and which certainlie was intended by the contrivers, and authorizers of the Solemn League and Covenant. For I humblie pray your Lordſhip and the reſt, to weigh the force of this *Dilemma* in the balance of your moſt ſerious thoughts; That either that Parliament was diſſolv'd by the late Kings death, or it was not. If it were, then all the Acts and Ordinances of that piece of Parliament, which called it ſelfe a Parliament, and continued to ſit after that time are Nullities, the many infallible conſequences whereof I will not deduce.

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If it were not, then though it have been discontinued now a great while, yet is it not dissolv'd, this having been the peculiar right, and priviledge of that Parliament, that it could not be dissolv'd, prorogued, or adjourn'd but by Act of Parliament, which right and priviledge all that have entred into the said Solemne League and Covenant are thereby obliged in their several Vocations to endeavour mutually to preserve. And perhaps all you, my Lord and Gentlemen, I am sure the generalitie of the Citie (not to mention thousands in the Countrey, as well of the Kings Partie as of the Parliaments) have sworne that Covenant with hands lifted up to the most High God, who will not be mocked. And besides this, how the ancient and undoubted Liberties, and priviledges of Parliament, which by the additional Petition and Advise the late Lord Protector, and all his Successors was, and are bound to preserve (as I humblie conceive) and not to suffer them to be broken or interrupted, can be preserved, and secured from being broken and interrupted: Or how the Rights and Liberties of the people of this Kingdome, which by the same additional advice every member of Parliament, as a Member of Parliament, is by his Oath bound to endeavour to preserve, can be preserved by any other means beside the recontinuing of that Parliament the contriver or contrivers, and the givers of that Advice might possibly comprehend, and so may the Members of the present Parliament (for so many quick-sighted eyes may see much more then any one) but I will here freely acknowledge, that it is beyond the reach of my understanding.

In the third place my humble request to your Lordship and the rest is, that either by a Petition from

your ſelves, in the name of the whole City to his Highneſſe the Lord Protector, or by a motion from thoſe choſen by the Citie to ſerve in this Parliament, or by both, as to your wiſdomes it ſhall ſeeme moſt expedient, you would be pleaſed to move, that all Members of both Houſes of this, and of all future Parliaments may take that Oath, which with the Bill to that purpoſe hereunto annexed, was by me drawn up in the third year of the Reign of the late King, by the advice of the Lord *Cook*, and by me offer'd to the then Houſe of Commons, after I had therin made the ſpeech hereunto annext, which I had before that ſhew'd by a friend to a Peere of this Kingdome, then, and yet of greateſt reputation for wiſdome, and had his approbation thereof; Or if that Oath ſhall be found either defective, or inconvenient in any reſpect, then ſome other Oath of their own framing to the ſame purpoſe. The chief of the Aldermen who ſerved in that Parliament for the Citie (whoſe name I have now forgotten) was pleaſed to ſecond me very affectionatelie, when I brought in that Bill, yet, by the occaſion I have toucht in the adjoyn'd Advertiſement, after a ſecond Reading it was ſo committed, that it hath been a cloſe priſoner ever ſince. For though it were by me ſince put into the hands of a Member of the Houſe of Commons, ſoon after the opening of the late long Parliament, with a deſire to have had the Act firſt turn'd into an Ordinance, and then paſſed by the Upper Houſe unto the late King for his Royal Aſſent, which no doubt his Majeſty would moſt gladly, not onely have given, but have taken the ſame Oath himſelf, if that had been humbly deſired of his Majeſty, and that, by Gods bleſſing, might have been a means to have pre-

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vented the great miſ-underſtanding between his Majeſtie and that Parliament at firſt, afterwards ſet on fire, and blowne up into the flame of a moſt unnatural War by Jeſuitical counſels, given on both ſides ſo craftilie, that they who gave theſe councels were never diſcovered on either ſide. For the men of that Sect have been long verſ'd in the trick, to ſet up a pack of Cards in ſuch a manner, that all the Diamonds (I meane Puritans) from the Ace to the Ten, ſhall by tales ſuggeſted to them, ſeem to be they that throw down all the Coat Cards of that colour, when in truth the knave of Clubbs is the firſt mover of the Bunch. But that Member of the Houſe of Commons conſpired with the formerly intimated, to keep the ſaid Bill cloſe in his own hands, for ought I know, why he knoweth beſt. I have therefore now ſet it at full libertie, and do hereby humblie recommend it not onely to your Lordſhip, and the reſt of the Gentlemen to whom it is addreſſed, but under their good favour, and with due ſubmiſſion to the conſideration of all the Members of both Houſes of the preſent Parliament. From whom if it, with the reſt I have now taken the boldneſſe to offer to you, my Lord, and Gentlemen, ſhall be ſo happy as to paſſe to his Highneſſe the Lord Protector, I can therefore have no doubt of his Highneſs aſſent thereunto, becauſe to the beſt of my poore underſtanding, no humane means can tend more to the ſettling of his Highneſs, and of this, and the neighbour Kingdoms too in a happy condition. Wherein, after ſome months (I might ſay years) debate thereupon with my ſelfe, and as long continued prayers to God night and day for the aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit of wiſdom, which he hath promiſed to give to them that want and ask it, I

am grown ſo confident, that if I were as much and nearly intereſſed in his Highneſs proſperity, as his Conſort and children are, and in the proſperity of theſe Kingdoms as himſelf is, and had the honour to be as high a favourite of his affaires, as Cardinal *Wolſey* ſometime was to King *Henry* the eighth; I would give his Highneſſe the ſame councel I have now preſum'd in all humility to propound to your Lordſhip, and the reſt, but with this caveat, that the matter might be ſo manag'd by his wiſdome, that it might be given to him by others, and not be known to have been either given by me, or taken by himſelf.

Whereunto I have but this to adde in the fourth and laſt place, that you my Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common-Councel, and by your perſwaſion, the whole City would withal be pleaſed unanimouſly to reſolve, and as unanimouſly to declare your full reſolution, to ſtand by his highneſſe with your lives and eſtates againſt all oppoſition whatſoever, if it may pleaſe his Highneſſe to re-continue the ſaid long Parliament (which heretofore ſtood chiefly by your ſupport under God) according to the tenour of your Petition to his Highneſſe, or his Parliament, or rather to them both. And that your Lordſhip, and the Citie, which payeth moſt by much in all impoſed taxes, would in that reſpect, do your ſelves the honour, and right to be the firſt to move in the Houſe of Commons, that a ſufficient ſupply may be by them preſently granted and ſent up to the Other Houſe, and without any delay tendred to his Highneſs for the ſupplie of the many great and urgent occaſions of the State at home and abroad, till the alreadie longeſt Parliament that ever met may be re-aſſembled, and continued ſo much longer onelie,

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till now this extreamlie diſcompos'd and diſordered Church and State, may be by them through Gods bleſſing reduced to ſome good ſettlement upon righteous foundations (no other being durable) which if I may live to ſee, I ſhall then joyfully ſing my *Nunc dimittis*, this being the ſeventie third Year of my age. The God and Lord of the Spirits of all fleſh put ſuch thoughts and reſolutions into the heart of your Lordſhip, and of all thoſe to whom theſe poor papers are addreſſed, and of all other into whoſe hands they may come, as may tend moſt to the advancement of his own honour, and of the weale of this Church and State, according to the prayer of

My Lord and Gentlemen,

Your Lordſhips, and theirs, and the Cities moſt humble ſervant,

FRANCIS NETHERSOLE.

From my Cell at Poleſworth in the County of *warwick*, this 27. of Jan. 1658.

FINIS.